1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

It is rare that a request is refused. Excuses have to be invented. Property, in consequence, changes hands very rapidly, especially if it is anything novel. The stuff a man receives at a ceremonial exchange or festival is sometimes begged off him when he gets home. Prizes are not much of a reward, as they may not remain in the winner's hands more than a day.

The government discourages begging and an anti-begging league was founded in 1905. The custom found a champion in the Native Gazette (11, July, 1905):

> This Fijian custom is not wholly bad; it is well merely to correct it. What is Fijian begging? Begging is the requisition (*lala*) of the common folk. See, the commons in Fiji cannot make requisitions; for requisitions are the chief's part. But what are requisitions? Requisitions are begging on a very big scale; they have not ceased, but are allowed by the law. Well, the commoner has begging as his only requisition. It is plain as day moreover that there is not much begging without return. If you come and beg my lamp because you are hard up, presently when I am hard up for clothes I shall beg some of you: so my lamp will be paid for. According to Fijian custom it is hard to refuse, because it represents paying, or trading, or the mutual aid of kinsmen. It is plain also that there are men who are humbugs (i.e. who don't play the game, but abuse the custom), because that is the way of the world. That is the end of the argument, now turn to the evil of forbidding people wholesale to beg, as you are doing; the chiefs, they are free to go on putting levies upon us but then we are undone by it since we are forbidden to beg. Who is the commoner to approach you nobles and say, "Please pay me, Sir, for what I have done, or for the food I have brought," or whatever it be? Impossible. If your requisitions cease, your calls on us (*mata*) your proclamations, your pomp (*vakaturanga*), then will begging cease.
>
> There are two forms of begging in Fiji. One is begging without return after the fashion of chiefs, that is bad and should be given up. But there is also a begging when in want which is payment for work and other things, and it is right and expedient to preserve it. But it looks as though you were prohibiting both, that we commoners may die twice in consequence we shall be made to work and it will be forbidden to us to beg in return. The ancient times were better than now. The carpenters built canoes; they worked without pay inasmuch as it was a requisition on them; they were fed while it went on, and they delivered the canoe. The feast of the workers (*otho*) was finished, but there was still to come some reward. Wait till you see some stuff in the possession of the chief; they will go and beg for it.

The Fijian is shrewd. Under an appearance of lavishness he counts the cost of everything, and if, at a ceremonial exchange for instance, he does not receive the full value of what he gave, he will take the balance in prestige and admiration. If a man cannot make a full return in kind for what he has begged, he will be under an obligation and have to do all kinds of services for his neighbor. The critics of Fijian begging all reason *a priori*. The facts are there to prove that the practice does not work as they think it should. As a matter of fact, the hard worker is always better off for his rank than the lazy man, and more influential, unless he is a man of no personality who does all the work of the clan and does not exact

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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(p. 134). I have never seen it in stencilled pieces which are complete in themselves and not forming a sheet (*ngatu*). In these single pieces is usually a border, inside which are patterns longitudinally from end to end or disposed in checks; there is usually a fringe of red hatching called *vakale-wenimbisi* (like the flesh of a *mbisi*). 531

The style I have described is that of Lakemba; it is short, whereas in Thakaundrove and Matuku "it is made long." In effect the whole work in Lakemba is done by laying short stencils one beside the other, whereas in Thankaundrove long lines are painted.

In Lakemba stencilling is almost, if not entirely, confined to Wathiwathi. All my specimens come from there, except one from Ono, and all my information comes from those two places. In Tumbou a few know how to stencil, but they do it only on large sheets in Fijian style, not on single pieces.

In Tumbou the work is almost entirely in the Tongan style, on large sheets made up of many pieces and covered with red brown designs produced by rubbing. These sheets are called *ngatu* and are used for such things as blankets, dancing dresses, screens. [77]

Formerly if a woman wanted to paint bark cloth (*kesakesa*) her friends would without invitation come to help her. A feast would be made for them, each one getting a basket of food. Now they have guilds called *kauta* (from the Tongan *kautaha*, or else *kampani*, company) and each guild has a workshop. At present there are two in Tumbou: the Big Company (*kampani levu*) or Nandawa in Tai, Muritu, or the Second, in Tumbou quarter; one in Levuka. Formerly there was a third one, called Torotoromalua, in Tumbou. The guilds are called together by the beating of a hide drum, and hold councils to discuss the work, for instance to make a sheet for the child of one of the members, another time for another member. They have a president, a secretary, and sundry officials. The Native Gazette states (11, p. 136, 1905): 531 476 575

> The President will say, "Tomorrow let all the members of the guild beat out bark cloth to the number of ten or twenty score." Before dawn the sound of the drum is heard and each one strives to achieve the amount set by their President. On the evening of that day the drum is again beaten to summon them to their President, and they are asked if they have each completed the allotted task or not. After that the President again decides what shall be done on the morrow, whether to cut copra, make sheets, or any other work. The money they earn from time to time by cutting copra is not divided up; it is brought and placed in the public chest (*kato ni tu*) to be kept. When the President sees there is enough bark cloth beaten out, she decides thus, "Tomorrow let us make a sheet for Lady So-ond-so." In this way the Lady So-and-so is not in the least burdened with a workers' feast (*otho*). The workers' feast is entirely in the hands of the President. They will be fed out of the company's funds kept in the public chest. The Secretary will withdraw the amount of money 476 575

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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required for the beef, tins of biscuits, sugar, tobacco, kava, and other things for their use.

In the workshop there is a large convex board on which the patterns (*kupeti*) are made as follows:

String made of *vau* is wound round the end of a strip of mangrove; another strip is placed next to the first and the string wound once round, and so on; then the string is wound again round each strip but lower down, and so on until a kind of grating is made on which screwpine leaves are fixed, the result being a kind of card (*i vaka mata*). The designs are made by laying bits of ekels[10] on the card according to the desired figure and sewing them on with coconut fiber, the whole is then smeared with the dye (*kesa*) used for bark cloth; this acts as a glue. The designs are generally called birds, or animals (*manumanu*). Whereas stencils are geometrical, these plates are naturalistic.

In addition to those illustrated in figure 11, the following names of applique patterns for tapa were obtained from Mbau: centipede, pipi fruit, *sesea* fruit, *kusi*, a bird; and from Tonga bats hanging from a tree.

Each worker brings her own pieces of bark cloth. The women sit on either side of the board provided with pots of raw dye, and with boiled manioc for glue. Two elderly ladies (*marama ndina*) are appointed to deal out the pieces to the workers; their title is *vakataututu*.

First they lay a long broad piece of bark cloth along the board, on which no rubbings are made, but lines are carefully drawn across it at intervals; this piece is called *tapa mua*, front border. A second piece is stuck alongside the first with manioc; the women dip their pads of bark cloth into the raw dye and take a rubbing on this piece; but not at the ends, which are merely marked with a number; these ends are called *tapa*. This second piece is then smeared with manioc and short pieces are laid across it along the whole of its length and rubbed. Then the longitudinal piece is shifted and another piece is laid on the board overlapping; it is rubbed, and smeared with manioc; the transverse pieces are stuck down upon it and rubbed; and so it goes on, each new long piece being numbered at the end. The long pieces are called *laulalo* (Tongan, the leaf below), and the transverse ones *laulunga* (the leaf above). It is the task of the dealers to sort out the leaves properly. A patch is called *i mono*, a Tongan word for which the Lauan is *i potani*.

The work proceeds gaily and noisily, the workers chatting away. Sometimes they will strike up snatches of Tongan dances. Kava is made and served at intervals. Now tea has replaced the *hoho* pudding which formerly was provided.

The work is measured thus: the length of the board is one *lalanga;* each *lalanga* therefore repeats the whole set of design; ten *lalanga* forms one *lau;* ten *lau*, one *lautefui*—all Tongan words.

On the next day, if the weather is fine, the sheets are put out to dry. One or two women draw black lines across with boiled dye to mark off the *lalanga;* the dye is laid on with ekels. Here and there dark brown discs (*tukisea*) are painted with boiled dye. The sheet must on no account get wet.

Besides Tongan drapery (*ngatu vakatonga*) there is a Fijian drapery (*ngatu vakaviti*) also called *ngatu tasinga*, which may roughly be described

[10] Rib of coconut leaves.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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775 inhabitants or the immigrants in Lau. Similar concepts are found, however, in Tonga and other neighboring parts of Polynesia.

The Kambara people say that Mburotu is an island situated between Ono and Matuku. In olden days it was above the water but now it is submerged. The trees, like everything else on this island, are red so it is called Mburotu Kula (Red Mburotu). The island is inhabited by beautiful women so it is called *vanua ni alewa* (land of women). They are clean and light skinned like Tongans and Samoans. The women are spirits who never die. Many men have tried in vain to find Mburotu. In olden days Kumbunavanua, a chief, lived on the island. He had two canoes. He went to Totoya in one while his two sons went in the other to Moala. When Kumbunavanua left Mburotu the island disappeared.

The land people believed in a local abode of the soul after death. According to Moto of Undu, when a man of the Kambaran lower class died his soul went with a hissing sound to Nggara Levu (Big Cave), a burial cave located near the *ngingia* tree. Nggara Levu is the abode of the souls of the early inhabitants. The following tale is told:

> When Ramatau, a man of the lower class who lived near Lomatchi, died he said, "Take me to Nggara Levu." The people took him to the beach and decided to bury him there, but he said from beneath his cover, "This is not Nggara Levu." So they took him to Vatoa because Nggara Levu was far from Lomatchi. At Vatoa he said again, "This is not Nggara Levu." So finally they took him to Nggara Levu.

Moto says he has heard that the souls of the land people went from Nggara Levu to the highest rock on the reef, which is shaped like the roof of a house. He has not heard whether or not the souls of the land people go to Mburotu, but he says that this rock faces Mburotu and is connected with it by means of a submarine coral formation.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Nanga

● 575 Moto says that the commoners of Kambara formerly had a secret society called Nanga, which was "very, very old" and had ceased to exist before his time. All Moto knew about it was that it was secret and that it existed before the migration from Viti Levu to Lau. No other information regarding the Nanga in Lau was obtained.

A secret society called Nanga was formerly found in a limited area in central and western Viti Levu. According to Fison (7, pp. 14-30) the Nanga was a secret society consisting of three age groups, into which all the males of the community were initiated. The purpose of the society was induction of the grown men into full tribal membership. The rites took place in a sacred rectangular stone enclosure and consisted of offerings to ancestral spirits,

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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circumcision, ordeals, dancing, license, and distribution of wealth. In 1884 the Nanga ceremonies were no longer performed.

Moto's is the only known evidence of the occurrence of the Nanga outside the area mapped by Fison. No stone enclosures such as those described by Fison were found in Lau. (For further information concerning the Nanga see Brewster, 1, pp. 93-95.)

Luve ni Wai

The Luve ni Wai (Offspring of the Water) is a secret cult found in many parts of Fiji. (See Brewster, 1, pp. 89, 222-225; Williams, 27, vol. 1, pp. 237-239.) It is one medium by which individuals, disgruntled at the new social order, can gain social prestige in the community. The colonial government has attempted to suppress the cult, hence the natives usually deny knowledge of it. One form of the cult is practiced today in southern Lau. A few informants gave the following account of it.

> The cult consists of a few young men, each of whom has demonstrated his ability to procure and hold a personal guardian god who supplies him with mana. The mana is expressed in the form of a special gift, such as the ability to create new dance forms or medicines, to predict the future, interpret the past, or discover new members for the cult. The guardian gods called *luve ni wai* are usually the ghosts of departed ancestors, not spirits, and are today called "devils."

Some informants say they dwell in and near the water, others say they live on land, in water, stars, sky, in fish and trees. Ndengei, Tutumatua, Ndauthina, Ndakuwangga, Rayawa, and Vuthurongayau are important *luve ni wai*.

The following tale is told about Ndakuwangga, the shark god, who became a *luve ni wai*:

> Ndaunisai was the father of Wangganouanoua, who came with Ndaunisai from Viti Levu to Kambara. Wangganouanoua went to Mbenau Island at Taveuni. When the people of the island were hauling a canoe from the shore to the water, Wangganouanoua hid in a hollow tree trunk because he wanted to show the people he was a god. While the god was in the tree trunk, it was used as a roller for the canoe. When Wangganouanoua went aboard the canoe and told the men he had been inside the hollow trunk, they called him Ndakuwangga. He entered a shark. The people began to pray to this god of the shark and called it *luve ni wai* because it was from the water. Since then the shark had been tabu to the Taveuni people. The Kambara people do not eat the shark because the father of this *luve ni wai* came to Kambara.

According to informants, Luve ni Wai rites are carried on secretly in the bush at night. The leader and the members of the cult oil their bodies and dress in ceremonial tapa and wreaths. They take kava to the bush, sit in a kava circle, and prepare the drink ceremonially. The first cup is poured on the ground as an offering to the gods. The leader drinks first. The men call the gods by means of prayers. When the gods come, each enters and possesses his votary. While possessed, the men are insensitive to physical pain. They jump, dance, and club one another.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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575 jump, dance, and club one another. While in this state they receive mana in the form of inspiration from their guardians.

Each member is a specialist in some skill and has a guardian of his own whose name he bears. A creator of a new dance form receives them from the god of the dance (*meke*); a medicine man receives new medicines from the god of medicine. The membership of the cult is controlled by a god named Rayawa. When propitiated with kava, Rayawa reveals the names of new members. The man who discovers new members for the cult has Rayawa for his god. [776 782]

The leader of the cult on each island is called the originator of the bamboo (*vuninduvu*), for, as the oldest bamboo is surrounded by many shoots, so the leader is surrounded by many members. He has the strongest guardian and the most mana. Every new member must make a ceremonial offering of kava to the leader. If the leader is challenged, a contest is arranged during the Luve ni Wai rites and the member who is least vulnerable, and therefore has the most powerful god, wins and takes the leadership.

[782] Native informants say that a Luve ni Wai member occasionally propitiates his guardian by leaving a bowl of kava in the bush. When he returns, not the next day perhaps but certainly after a few days, the kava has disappeared from the bowl.

575 195 538 Informants say that in olden days Luve ni Wai members had their own idiom which could not be understood by the people. These old *meke* (chants) are difficult to translate, but, when one examines them one sees that poetic license and figures of speech rather than actual vocabulary differences set them apart from modern *meke*. However, many words which appear in the old *meke* cannot be translated by the natives today. The old Luve ni Wai *meke* are lyric poetry, highly subjective, in contrast to the more recent ones, which are definitely realistic.

575 539 The following *meke*, which are not understood by present natives, are said to be in Luve ni Wai idiom:

Nai wau (club dance) chanted by Tatchini of Kambara

(Drum beats—small *lali ni meke* type)

Na vatu manawa, na vua i rama	The floating stones, the fruits of light
Yau talatala, vakaselotaki mana wangga	The murmuring breeze, welcoming the wonderful canoes
Tambu wangga ko ira na kai Mathuata,	Chiefly canoes, they are the people of Mathuata,
Laki kele sara i matamatana.	About to anchor at the mouth of the passage.

(Drum beats)

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Na wesi (spear dance) chanted by Tatchini of Kambara

Takiva na ika ni wai ndrondro,	They catch the fish in the current,
Kithoka na ika soni lolo,	They spear the fish at high tide,
Ndua a theva urea mo.	A southeast wind begins to blow.
E sa urea sa lutu koto.	When it blows there is no chance (to fish).
Raunama nongguo	The fishermen turn homeward.
Kena wai tambu nda vakarorongo.	The sea becomes still,
E tumbu a tha kau nggai ndrondro.	Then it swells as I go back (to the beach).
E ruru a tha kau sunggai koto.	So I go home and the storm abates.
Koi au a wai vuni rongorongo.	I listen to the secret of the sea.

Volau, a *meke* master of Namuka, creates new dances of the following types: *seasea, vakamalolo, meke ni malungu* (club dance), and *meke iri* (fan dance). He was born on Oneata and his father was born on Matuku, which, according to the natives, is a *meke* making center. When the people of Namuka want a new *meke* they present kava to Volau. He accepts the kava and in the evening it is prepared. On the first or the second evening, while he is drinking kava, the god comes to him and he expresses the words, the rhythm, and the movements of a *meke*. He teaches it to the people, who must learn it quickly because Volau forgets it immediately.

ECONOMIC LIFE

PROPERTY

Land Scarcity

Scarcity of fertile soil is a basic factor in the economic life of the southern Lau Islands. On the limestone islands the supply of garden land is fixed and limited. Practically all the garden land that can be profitably cultivated is in use. On the volcanic islands, the supply of fertile land exceeds the demand.

On Kambara all the best land (*nggele ntchina*, true soil) and some of the second grade land has been cleared and is used for gardens. In years of normal rainfall the supply of garden produce remains more or less constant, and garden production is only slightly below the needs of the population. New land is rarely cleared because the natives think it will not repay the effort. They believe that extensive cultivation of more second grade land might increase production somewhat in years of normal rainfall, but that in dry years there would be a shortage of food regardless of how much land was under cultivation. They think that more intensive cultivation, by native methods, of the land already cleared would increase the yield sufficiently to supply their needs in normal years with less labor and more profit. However, several factors work against intensive cultivation. First, the dislike which the nobles feel toward work on the land has had an effect upon the whole popula-

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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797 in everything he undertakes. Usually when he goes to the other side of the island to conduct services he travels in state [622] in his canoe, conspicuously decorated with white cowry shells, a symbol of chieftainship. He is dressed in the height of fashion—a fresh white shirt, a black *lavalava* and a blue woolen coat, even on the most sultry day. If he travels by [554] land he walks slowly, swinging his cane, a symbol of rank. He is followed a few yards behind by his assistant, a youth who carries a small imported satchel. At the beginning of the service he takes from this satchel a Fijian Bible and a pair of spectacles set with plain glass. Attached to one rim is the price tag, which shows that the glasses were bought in the store. Before beginning to read he carefully dons the spectacles, but is no whit disturbed if, in the heat of the service, they slip down the bridge of his nose.

797 Especially did Christianity have a far-reaching effect on the 182 native social organization. The breakdown of the ancestor 631 cult undermined the inner structure of the native system of ranked clans. It took the sacredness out of chieftainship and broke the power of the tabu, which formerly maintained law and order in society. Moreover, the increased emphasis on personality rather than rank weakened the power of the chiefs. The mission tried to uphold chieftainship by encouraging the natives to pay tribute and abide by the commands of their chiefs, and the colonial officials followed mission policy. Their aim was to reinforce the power of the chiefs by appointing them as colonial officials and thus to utilize the native social system for political purposes as far as possible. However, in applying this plan, personality as well as rank had to be considered, and frequently chiefs were passed over in favor of gifted individuals of lower rank. Hence authority formerly held exclusively by the chiefs was divided between chiefs, native government officials, and native missionaries.

178 In recent times individuals deprived of hereditary power 575 and of warfare, their principal emotional outlets, have found

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new channels for self-expression in medicine, in sorcery, and in secret cults such as the "Water Babies" (*Luveniwai*, literally meaning "offspring of the water").

The "Water Babies" is a colorful secret society found in parts of Fiji. It is forbidden by the government and hence most natives deny knowledge of it. The cult is not very active in southern Lau and my impression was that most natives know very little about it. It was months before anyone would discuss it with me and I did not witness any of the secret rites. I was told, however, that the cult has a few members on some of the southern islands.

To become a member of the "Water Babies" a man must have a personal guardian spirit called a water baby, which dwells in the water or in the forest. This spirit supplies him with "mana" in the form of a special talent, such as the ability to create new dances or medicines, to predict the future, or to discover new members for the cult. To obtain a guardian spirit a man goes to the bush secretly, prepares a bowl of kava and prays to the spirits. If he is successful, one of the spirits responds by entering his body and he gains special abilities. Many young men admitted that they had tried in vain to secure a guardian spirit. Only a few individuals are favored by a response from the spirit world. The ones reputed to have guardian spirits were all restless, slightly maladjusted, and frequently gifted young men. They had apparently grown dissatisfied with the monotony of modern life and were seeking superhuman outlets for their energies.

The members of the cult propitiate their guardian spirits in the bush at night. Fantastic accounts are given of these secret rites. The votaries oil their bodies and dress in ceremonial barkcloth. They sit in a kava circle and one of them prepares kava ceremonially. The first cup of kava is poured on the ground as an offering to the spirits. The men drink the remainder of the kava and call upon their spirits with prayers and songs. Finally the spirits respond and as each

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575 776 782 enters his votary the men begin to shake and tremble violently. Their flesh twitches. They begin to dance and work themselves up into a frenzy. Some club one another. In this state they are insensible to pain. Men are frequently injured and were in the past occasionally killed during these rites. While possessed they receive "mana" from their guardian spirits in the form of inspiration, each along the lines of his own specialty.

[774] The member with the most "mana" on each island is the leader of the cult. If he is challenged, a contest is held during the rites and the least vulnerable wins and takes over the leadership.

The "Water Baby" cult found its way into southern Lau from Fiji proper. Mr. Brewster, who spent forty years as a government official in Fiji, has described the cult as it appeared in the interior of Viti Levu where it was strong at the end of the nineteenth century and still practiced in the 1920's.[49]

797 575 The early missionaries ignored the cult. Compared to more violent practices which they had to combat, such as cannibalism, widow strangling, and human sacrifice, it seemed relatively harmless except that it encouraged laziness and frequently led to bloodshed. However, when the mission had become well established in Fiji they demanded its suppression. The colonial government followed mission policy and made the practice criminal.

Mr. Brewster's comments on government policy concerning the cult are interesting. He wrote: ". . . looking down that long vista of years and after much reflection, I think that we took a wrong view of the *luveniwai*. There was no need to regard it so seriously, as in my opinion it was not really seditious. It led the boys to be cheeky and insubordinate, and to a certain amount of larceny . . . There were plenty of native regulations against insubordination, disobedience and any sort of disturbance. We did not need anything special

[49] A. B. Brewster, op. cit., pp. 222-229.

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against *luveniwai* and could have kept the naughty boys in order with what had been provided previously. Anyway we failed to stamp it out . . . I think there is not much harm in it so long as the votaries refrain from picking and stealing, and are duly respectful to their elders, and there is certainly a fair element of romance and poetry about it."[50]

Mr. Brewster endorsed the introduction of cricket into his district in the hope that the game would give the boys an outlet for their superfluous energy. Cricket clubs were organized and the game became very popular. It was soon found, however, that cricket was being used as a cloak for cult activities. In one district the organization aimed to free the natives from British rule. In imitation of the system of colonial administration in Fiji they had elected a governor, chief justice, and chief secretary. The native cult, altered by the introduction of cricket and organized in imitation of the colonial government, was being used for political purposes. The movement was effectively suppressed when the new cult leaders were sent to jail.

Many other natives besides those of the "Water Baby" cult make the adjustment to modern life by turning to a greater or less extent to their ancestral gods. An example of this is the rise of the *Tuka* or "Immortality" secret society. About 1873 (forty years after the introduction of Christianity into Fiji) a secret cult sprang up in the foothills of the Nakauvandra mountains in northeast Viti Levu. This is the traditional home of Ndengei, the great snake god and the mythical deity of Fiji. The leader of the "Immortality" cult was a young man named Ndukumoi (pronounced En-du-ku-moí) of a hereditary priest clan. He was not striking in appearance—a Negroid type of medium height and bleary-eyed from excessive kava drinking.[51] Ndukumoi left his home and went to Taveuni, an island off the east coast of Vanua Levu, where

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.
[51] "The *Tuka* Religion," *Transactions of the Fijian Society, 1910*, 1925, p. 54.